

City of San Antonio

**Animal Care Strategic Plan
Prepared by the
Animal Care Services Advisory Board**

August 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, City Council took steps to implement new policies to end gas euthanasia of animals and to increase funding to spay/neuter programs. With these efforts, the Animal Care Services Department (ACS) continues to euthanize between 40,000-50,000 animals each year. On February 7, 2006, through a Council Consideration Request, Mayor Hardberger directed staff to begin the process of developing a five-year strategic plan to significantly reduce the number of unwanted animals in this community.

The City of San Antonio's Animal Care Services Advisory Board (Advisory Board) held a strategic planning session on May 8-9, 2006 to develop a strategic plan. Facilitated by Tim Fallon, President of TSI Consulting, Inc., the Advisory Board identified central challenges, defined key strategic priorities, and developed a strategic map (page 4 of this document) to outline key objectives that must be reached to accomplish each strategy point.

The Advisory Board has identified the central challenge for the strategic plan to be:

The City of San Antonio will challenge and lead the community to achieve a "no kill" goal by 2012.

Given the complexity of the issues in achieving a "no kill" goal, the Advisory Board has determined that a realistic and attainable goal year is 2012. The Advisory Board clearly recognizes that achieving this goal includes significant improvements in the practices of the Animal Care Services Department. Achieving a "no kill" goal by 2012, however, goes far beyond those improvements. It requires challenging the entire community to carry out a comprehensive set of actions to transform attitudes and behaviors toward animal care and owner responsibility within the City of San Antonio. For the purposes of this plan, the Advisory Board has established the preliminary definition of "no kill" to mean that all healthy and/or treatable animals find a home and that the only animals euthanized are so sick or behaviorally impaired as to not be adoptable.

In developing the plan, the Advisory Board secured community input, both from leaders of animal care organizations and the community at large, through a series of meetings. An animal care stakeholders meeting was conducted on May 24, 2006 and four community meetings were conducted during the month of June 2006. Input, feedback and suggestions from the stakeholders and community members were utilized as the Advisory Board developed and finalized the strategic plan. The Advisory Board built upon the identified strategic priorities and objectives with action plans and timetables for implementation.

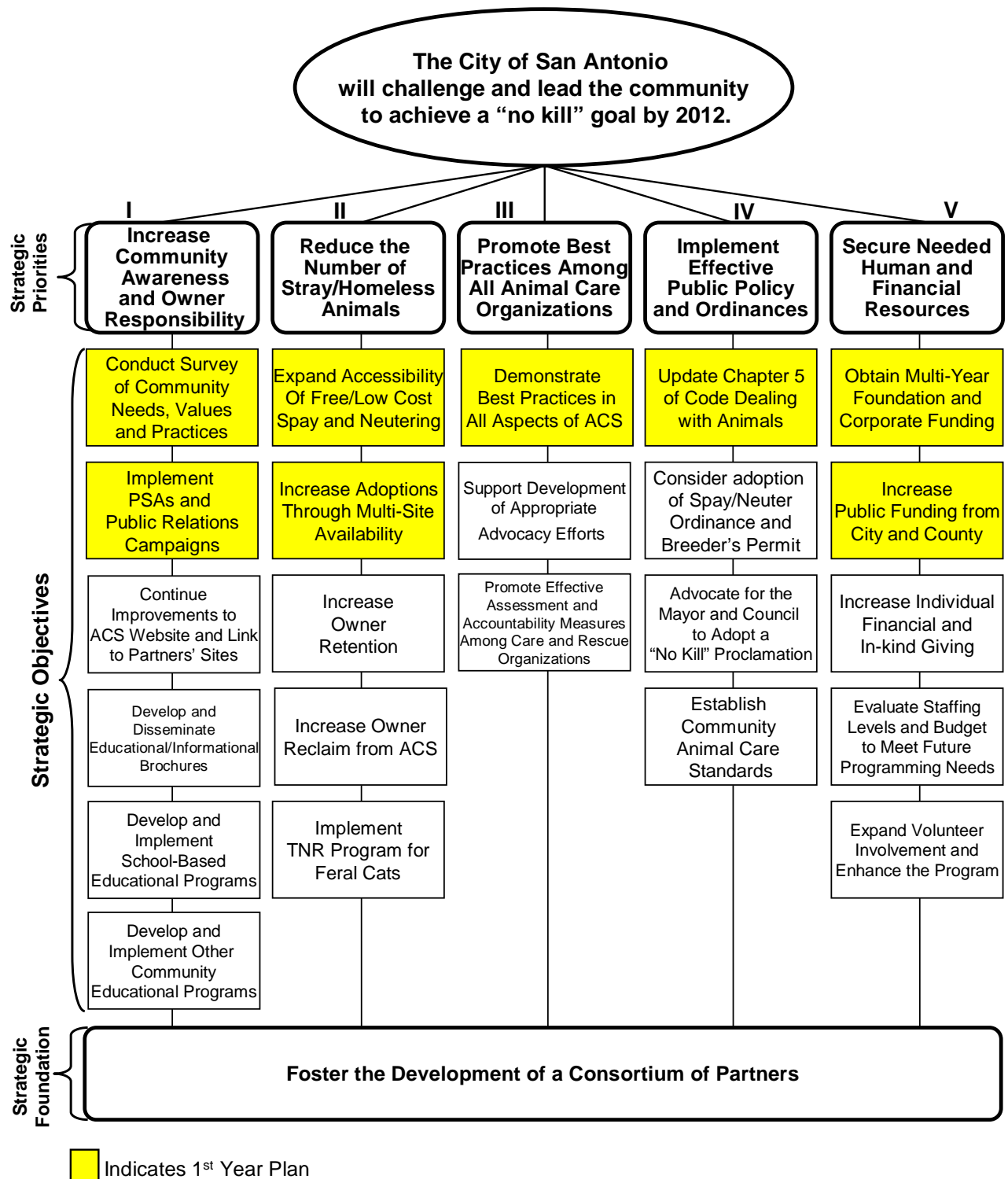
Strategic priorities identified in this plan to meet the central challenge include:

- I. Increase community awareness and owner responsibility
- II. Reduce the number of strays/homeless animals
- III. Promote best practices among all animal care & protection organizations
- IV. Implement effective public policy and ordinances
- V. Secure needed human and financial resources
- VI. Foster the development of a consortium of partners

Each strategic priority includes the rationale that relates to the central challenge of achieving a “no kill” goal by 2012. In addition, objectives and strategies have been identified for each strategic priority to guide efforts to accomplish each one.

This plan will guide ASC for the next five years and engage the community in a comprehensive approach to improving animal care within the City of San Antonio.

City of San Antonio Animal Care Services Strategic Map: 2006- 2012



MISSION STATEMENT

Make San Antonio a city in which every animal receives responsible care.

CENTRAL CHALLENGE

The City of San Antonio will challenge and lead the community to achieve a “no kill” goal by 2012.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

I. Increase community awareness and owner responsibility

Rationale

Achieving a “no kill” goal by 2012 requires increasing the entire community’s awareness of the critical animal care issues that the City of San Antonio faces. More importantly, it also requires increasing the level of responsibility that pet owners take for the care and treatment of their animals. A survey of the community’s animal care needs, values, and practices will provide a starting point for addressing this priority. After that baseline is established, a wide range of awareness building and educational efforts will be used to increase owner responsibility and engage the community in improving the quality of animal care in the City of San Antonio.

Objective 1.1

Conduct survey of community needs, values and practices

Strategy (Year 1):

Conduct a scientific citizen survey

- Hire firm to conduct survey community wide by zip code and council district
- Advisory Board to assist in gathering questions for survey

Responsibility:

City staff to hire and monitor firm

Advisory Board to assist in determining survey questions

Implementation Timeline:

Hire firm by September 30, 2006

Survey completion by November 30, 2006

Objective 1.2

Implement public service announcements (PSAs) and public relations campaigns

Strategy (Year 1):

Develop and implement a multifaceted, educational and informational media campaign

- A. Hire firm to develop public relations campaign
- B. Communications and Public Affairs Department to implement and manage plan developed by firm
- C. Identify and involve stakeholders in public relations process

Responsibility:

City staff to hire and monitor public relations firm

Implementation Timeline:

Hire firm, identify and involve stakeholders by September 30, 2006

Public relations plan developed by December 15, 2006

Objective 1.3

Continue improvements to the Animal Care Services website and link to partners' sites

Strategies (Year 1):

- A. Update website on a regular basis with information on services, news, and programs
- B. Establish ACS website domain name such as www.animalcareservices.org
- C. Continue to expand ListServ

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with the Information Technology Services Department

Implementation Timeline:

Ongoing

Objective 1.4

Develop and disseminate educational and informational brochures

Strategy (Year 2):

Educational and informational brochures targeting a variety of services and options with friendly language in both English and Spanish

- A. Enhance existing brochures at ACS
- B. Develop additional brochures that include general information as well as information regarding adoption, responsible pet ownership and spay/neuter options
- C. Develop and implement a door hang tag program with spay/neuter information to distribute with brush collection hang tags

Responsibility:
ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Objective 1.5
Develop and implement school-based educational programs

Strategy (Year 2):
Coordinate city-wide with educators on consistent, appropriate literature to target elementary age children regarding safety, responsible pet ownership and spay/neuter

- A. Utilize existing programs from national organizations
- B. Develop a curriculum based education program incorporating written material, speaking material and audiovisuals specific to San Antonio area
- C. Educational content coordinated with national organizations such as the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Responsibility:
ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Objective 1.6
Develop and implement other community educational programs

Strategy (Year 2-3):
Coordinate city-wide with a variety of civic and community groups to provide consistent, appropriate educational and programs material

- A. Develop educational speeches targeted to the community
 - Utilize educational and informational brochure content to develop informative, interactive and interesting speeches
 - Coordinate with churches and neighborhood associations to disseminate information
- B. Coordinate with Customer Service/311 Speaker Bureau Program for community requests and speaker scheduling
- C. Incorporate animal care into the City's Neighborhood Sweeps Program
- D. Implement a Street to Street Program to provide information and free or reduced cost spay/neuter to neighborhoods

Responsibility:
ACS in coordination with Advisory Board, Customer Service/311, and Neighborhood Services Department

Key Partnerships and Accountabilities for Success

- Colleges and universities
- School districts

- Media
- Churches
- Civic clubs
- Neighborhood associations
- Senior services associations
- Veteran service associations
- Military community
- Corporations
- Animal care and advocacy groups

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

II. *Reduce the Number of Stray/Homeless Animals*

Rationale

Achieving a “no kill” goal by 2012 requires a dramatic reduction in the number of stray and homeless animals in the City of San Antonio. This strategic priority outlines a number of initiatives to do that, including expanding the accessibility of free and low cost spay/neuter programs as well as implementing a Trap Neuter and Return Program (TNR) for feral cats. It also seeks to increase the number of animal adoptions by providing multiple adoption sites throughout the City. Finally, it seeks to increase both owner retention of animals and owner reclaim from the Animal Care Services Department.

Objective 2.1

Expand accessibility of free and low cost spay/neuter

Strategies (Year 1):

- A. Develop spay/neuter plan for implementation at the clinic in new facility for ACS animals and community walk-ins
- B. Explore use of mobile clinics for Neighborhood Sweeps
 - Identify cost and operational expenses for mobile clinic
- C. Maximize productivity of existing organizations that service the community
 - Define capacity and ability to increase productivity at organizations such as the Animal Resource Center, Spay/Neuter Assistance Program, Humane Society and Wild Animal Orphanage
 - Contact organizations to develop agreements to increase productivity

Responsibility:

ACS to develop use plan for new facility

Advisory Board to explore use of mobile clinics

Advisory Board to contact organizations to increase productivity

Implementation Timeline:

October 15, 2006

Objective 2.2

Increase adoptions through multi-site availability

Strategies (Year 1):

- A. Evaluate effectiveness of mobile adoption vans
 - Survey results of Animal Defense League and Humane Society adoption vans to determine feasibility
- B. Evaluate current Animal Care Services site and/or other accessible locations for possible adoption center
 - Determine suitable locations, size and cost estimates
 - Develop business plan for potential site

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with the Advisory Board and Animal Resource Center to evaluate adoption center locations

Advisory Board to explore use of adoption vans

Implementation Timeline:

April 1, 2006

Objective 2.3

Increase owner retention

Strategies (Year 2):

- A. Hire full time staff to counsel owners at ACS intake about alternative options to animal surrender
- B. Intake animals during specific hours only
- C. Implement an Animal Behavior Hotline
- D. Animal Care Officers to ticket owners, but not pick up harmless animals
- E. Provide an adoption packet to new owners with educational material and a DVD on pet ownership
- F. Provide adoption follow-up interviews with new owners

Responsibility:

ACS

Objective 2.4

Increase owner reclaim from Animal Care Services

Strategies (Year 2):

- A. Provide owners spay/neuter and educational alternatives to fines
 - Offer reduced fees or other alternatives for reclaim
 - Offer spay/neuter as an incentive for reclaim
 - Waive fees if owner has pet spayed/neutered
- B. Develop lost/found website in conjunction with Chameleon software system to assist in matching lost pets with owners

- C. Utilize resources such as pet finder sites and the classifieds to match lost pets with owners

Responsibility:
ACS

Objective 2.5
Implement Trap Neuter Return Program (TNR) for Feral Cats

Strategy (Year 2-3):
Research and develop TNR Program

- A. Advisory Board to define scope of TNR program
- B. Advisory Board subcommittee to review Code
- C. ACS to bring forward new ordinance to City Council relating to TNR
- D. Obtain necessary staffing and funding resources to implement program

Responsibility:
Advisory Board
ACS

Implementation Timeline:
October 1, 2008

Key Partnerships and Accountabilities for Success

- Colleges and universities – Vet and Vet Tech Programs
- Media
- Neighborhood associations
- Animal care and advocacy groups
- Volunteers
- Veterinary Medical Association of Bexar County

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

III. *Promote Best Practices Among All Animal Care Organizations*

Rationale

This strategic priority recognizes the critical importance of improving the policies and practices of the Animal Care Services Department. It focuses on the goal of bringing the Animal Care Services Department to a level where it consistently demonstrates best practices in all aspects of its operations. At the same time, this priority also outlines a much broader goal—promoting outstanding practices among all animal care organizations in San Antonio. It includes efforts to train animal caretakers, develop

appropriate education and advocacy efforts, and promote assessment and improvement efforts among animal care and rescue organizations.

Objective 3.1

Demonstrate best practices in all aspects of ACS

Strategies (Year 1):

- A. Establish an Operating Plan and Standard Operating Procedures for ACS employees
- B. Enhance communication with the public
 - Maintain regular communication with the public through weekly e-mails and community presentations
- C. Develop reliable and accurate database utilizing shelter software
- D. Implement initial and ongoing training initiatives in standard operating procedures and all relevant training topics
- E. Establish appropriate certification requirements for staff and Animal Care Officers

Responsibility:

ACS

Implementation Timeline:

December 1, 2006 implementation of shelter software

December 31, 2006 development of all procedures

Objective 3.2

Support development of appropriate advocacy efforts

Strategies (Year 2):

- A. Integrate with national, state and regional networks
- B. Build regional and community partnership efforts in both the public and private sector
- C. Foster continual communication between ACS and the community
- D. Promote collaboration among all animal care and advocacy organizations
- E. Establish Independent Commission to hold city accountable for plan implementation and meeting timelines

Responsibility:

Advisory Board

ACS

Objective 3.3

Promote effective assessment and accountability measures among care and rescue organizations

Strategies (Year 2):

- A. Coordinate with other animal care organizations to define measures and set realistic and attainable performance goals
- B. Collect accurate ASC and regional statistics to determine performance and accountability of programs and funding

Responsibility:

ACS

Key Partnerships and Accountabilities for Success

- National Animal Control Association
- Texas Animal Control Association
- National, state and regional animal care organizations
- Regional municipalities
- Animal care and advocacy groups

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

IV. Implement Effective Public Policy and Ordinances

Rationale

Achieving a “no kill” goal by 2012 requires the effective use of public policy and City ordinances. This priority outlines steps to update Chapter 5 of the Code dealing with animals to ensure it is congruent with best practices and supportive of achieving a “no kill” goal. In addition, it calls for the adoption of both a “no kill” proclamation by the Mayor and City Council and establishing companion pet care standards for animals in San Antonio. It also sets forth the use of ordinances if needed, to reduce the number of stray and homeless animals by evaluating the range of policies and/or ordinance opportunities to increase spay/neuter.

Objective 4.1

Update Chapter 5 of City Code Dealing with Animals

Strategy (Year 1):

Rewrite Chapter 5 of City Code

- A. Legalize a TNR Program for un-owned/feral cats
- B. Amend the ordinance fee structure for owner reclaim and animal surrender to allow for free spay/neuter

Responsibility:

Advisory Board in coordination with the City Attorney's Office

Implementation Timeline:

October 15, 2006 draft completed

December 2006 approval of draft by board

1st Quarter of 2007 present amendments to City Council

Objective 4.2

Consider adoption of spay/neuter ordinance and breeder's permit

Strategies (Year 2):

- A. Evaluate the range of policies and/or ordinance opportunities to increase spay/neuter
- B. Based on year one strategic plan performance, implement appropriate approach to spay/neuter and breeders
- C. Implement ACS policies that increase spay/neuter through:
 - Adoption programs
 - Violation of ordinances
 - Spay/neuter all animals that ACS has contact with
- D. Provide incentives for spay/neuter through reduced fines and fees
- E. Breeder's permits
 - Research best practices for breeders
 - Implement fee to cover cost that City incurs for breeders

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Implementation Timeline:

3rd quarter year 1 – review of data as its coming in

2nd quarter year 2 – have some proposal to review

Objective 4.3

Advocate for the Mayor and Council to Adopt a “no kill” proclamation

Strategies (Year 2):

- A. City Council to pass proclamation to demonstrate city support
 - Draft proclamation with Advisory Board input
 - Provide opportunity for community input
 - Consult with Mayor & City Council
 - Adopt proclamation in conjunction with consortium of partners
- B. Adopt resolution at City Council and Bexar County as well as other local municipalities

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Objective 4.4
Establish community animal care standards

Strategy (Year 3):

Develop minimum standards of care

- A. Research best practices
- B. Draft with Advisory Board input
- C. Provide opportunity for community input
- D. Develop process for education

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Key Partnerships and Accountabilities for Success

- Corporations
- Education institutions (K-16)
- Churches
- Neighborhood associations
- Public health organizations
- Veterinary Medical Association of Bexar County
- Government
- Nonprofit organizations
- San Antonio Feral Cat Coalition
- Animal care and advocacy groups

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

V. Secure Needed Human and Financial Resources

Rationale

Achieving a “no kill” goal by 2012 requires the effective deployment of both human and financial resources. This priority recognizes the need to diversify sources of funding and outlines objectives to augment public funding with financial and in-kind contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals. It calls for both increasing the staffing levels to meet future program needs and continuing to expand critical role of volunteers in carrying out program goals. It also encourages the City of San Antonio to use matching funds as a catalyst to encourage organizations to support the initiatives outlined in the strategic plan.

Objective 5.1

Obtain multiyear foundation and corporate funding

Strategies (Year 1):

- A. Develop partnership with San Antonio Area Foundation to manage fundraising plan
- B. Develop community fundraising plan to support the expansion of free and low cost spay/neuter programs
- C. Develop strategy for planned giving and endowment fund
- D. Use City matching funds as challenge grants

Responsibility:

Advisory Board in coordination with ACS
Other philanthropic organizations

Objective 5.2

Increase public funding from City and County

Strategies (Year 1):

- A. Prioritize ACS in the City's Annual Operating Budget
- B. Begin formal discussion with County regarding animal care
- C. Encourage the County to prioritize Animal Care Services in the County's Annual Operating Budget
- D. Evaluate current fee/fine structure
- E. Explore and evaluate other public funding options
- F. Survey animal care organizations to identify potential funding sources

Responsibility:

ACS
City Staff

Objective 5.3

Increase individual financial and in-kind giving

Strategies (Year 2):

- A. Promote services offered and need for in-kind and individual gifts
 - Package program services that easily identifies sponsorship opportunities
- B. Create and promote donation fund and tax benefit options
 - Identify all options for tax deductible opportunities
 - Create non-profit
- C. Create wish list of needed items for ACS as potential gifts
 - Promote list on website
 - Identify givers and items purchased
 - Develop donor acknowledgement program
 - Provide opportunity for naming rights at certain levels of donations

- D. Identify all methods for giving such as CPS inserts and HEB register coupons and revise annually
- E. Establish partnership with corporate pet organizations and other corporate entities for donation opportunities

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Objective 5.4

Evaluate staffing levels and budget to meet future programming needs

Strategies (Year 3):

- A. Promote Vet Tech training as a viable career in collaboration with ACCD, Palo Alto, Animal Resource Center and Texas A & M University
- B. Establish continual evaluation process utilizing program benchmarks and timelines to be completed by October 1st annually
- C. Analyze data from community and ACS to determine needs and establish reporting mechanism of those needs
- D. Develop data sharing among ACS, area shelters and rescue groups to determine needs
- E. Determine and implement best practice ratios for adequate staffing based upon program changes
 - Review best practices from other cities and national organizations
 - Provide Advisory Board with recommendations of industry standards to be followed
 - Follow state health standards to ensure compliance

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Objective 5.5

Expand volunteer involvement and enhance the program

Strategies (Year 2-5):

- A. Evaluate volunteer management program
 - Conduct task review to determine appropriate volunteer tasks inside and outside the adoption center
 - Provide adequate volunteer training and oversight
 - Identify volunteer program components and evaluate annual progress
 - Utilize volunteer program best practices
 - Establish initial expectations and set next year's business plan
 - Incorporate annual external review of volunteer program
 - Quantify value of volunteers

Responsibility:

ACS

Implementation Timeline:

Year 2

B. Develop community service initiative

- Identify potential partners, opportunities and the tasks they can perform
- Develop process for structured volunteer program to ensure proper accounting of hours served

Responsibility:

ACS and key partners

Implementation Timeline:

Year 3

C. Promotion of volunteer opportunities (website, newsletter)

- Continue to identify and create volunteer opportunities
- Identify venues including neighborhood, non-profit and corporate organizations to promote volunteer programs

Responsibility:

ACS

Implementation Timeline:

Year 2

D. Increase funding for foster care and volunteers

- Create a wish list for foster care and volunteers such as supplies, canned food and treats
- Establish baseline of services offered for foster care
- Quantify value of foster care

Responsibility:

ACS

Implementation Timeline:

Year 2-5

E. Create a volunteer recognition program

- Utilize best practices
- Update recognition programs regularly

Responsibility:

ACS

Implementation Timeline:

Year 2

Key Partnerships and Accountabilities for Success

- San Antonio Area Foundation
- Bexar County
- Nonprofit Resource Center
- Association of Fundraising Professionals
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Humane Society of the United States
- San Antonio Bar Association (Estate planning council)
- Mutual aid agreements with animal care organizations
- Animal care and advocacy groups

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

VI. Foster the Development of a Consortium of Partners

Rationale

The City of San Antonio's ability to achieve its "no kill" goal by 2012 depends on its ability to engage a wide range of partner organizations in carrying out this plan. Toward that end, the plan establishes this cross-cutting strategic priority as an essential means of carrying out the other five strategic priorities—from building community awareness to securing the needed human and financial resources. Efforts to develop these partnerships take the plan far beyond improving Animal Care Services. It establishes this plan as a community-wide initiative to improve animal care in the City of San Antonio and throughout the County.

Objective 6.1

A consortium of community leaders will form a coalition of partners that will commit to the achievement of the challenge statement of the "no kill" initiative by 2012.

Strategies (Year 1-5):

- A. Partner with San Antonio Area Foundation
- B. Identify community leaders to participate in consortium
- C. Establish non-profit

Responsibility:

ACS in coordination with Advisory Board

Implementation Timeline:

May 2007

Key Partnerships and Accountabilities for Success

- Corporations
- Education institutions (K-16)
- Churches
- Neighborhood associations
- Public health organizations
- Veterinary Medical Association of Bexar County
- Government
- Nonprofit organizations
- Animal care and advocacy groups